

Agreement with Central American Countries. You are also authorized and directed to notify the Congress, pursuant to section 2106(b)(2) of the Trade Act of 2002 (19 U.S.C. 3806(b)(2)), of the ongoing negotiations on Free Trade Agreements with the Republic of Singapore and the Republic of Chile, negotiations to establish a Free Trade Area for the Americas, and negotiations under the auspices of the World Trade Organization.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 2, 2002]

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 3, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on October 3.

Remarks to Hispanic Leaders

October 3, 2002

Thank you all for coming, and welcome to the White House compound. It's my honor to represent—to welcome you all here, to thank you for serving your communities and thank you for serving your Nation. Some of you are seeking office for the first time, and I think you'll find this to be a fantastic experience. Some of you have sought and won, and I want to congratulate you for that, and thanks for serving.

My job is, of course, to promote the diversity of America, to herald the fact that one of the great strengths of America is the fact that we're diverse and that we welcome diversity in this country. And we welcome diversity and celebrate diversity all kinds of ways, and one of the ways is that we've got Hispanic Heritage Month. And we recognize Hispanic Heritage Month here at the White House, and we do so in a variety of ways. One way, of course, is to remind people that I've picked some fabulous Americans who happen to be Hispanic to serve our country.

Everybody has got to have a good lawyer. [Laughter] *Mi abogado es magnifico.* [Laughter] And I want to thank Al Gonzales for his friendship. There's no better advisor.

He's a steady hand who knows the law, and he's doing a great, great job for the country. Ruben Barrales, who runs a very key department here in the White House—I know you're going to hear from Ruben, if you haven't already. He's a good young star and a fine guy. Rosario Marin is the Treasurer of the United States. Rosario, thank you for coming. I appreciate you being here.

If you're interested in finding good examples of people who have won and who have served with distinction, you need to look no farther than two from Florida and one from Texas—[laughter]—Congressman Henry Bonilla, who is a fine, fine—[applause]—and of course, Lincoln Diaz-Balart *y tambien* Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. I appreciate you all for coming.

And I see you brought along Mario, *tu hermano*. [Laughter] Mario, it's good to see you again. Mario Diaz-Balart is a State rep out of the State of Florida, a fine member of the delegation. He's a popular—not only a popular candidate but a popular public servant. And he takes his instructions from his brother—[laughter]—actually, from his mother. [Laughter] Dora Irizarry is here. She is a candidate for the attorney general of the State of New York. Dora, good luck, *buena suerte*. Thanks for coming. We've got a lot of other great candidates—none other than the next Governor of the State of New Mexico, Juan Sanchez. Thank you for coming, John.

I would spend all my time heralding those of you in the legislative branch or in the executive branch, but I've got some other things on my mind. But before I do, I also want to make sure there is diversity in the judicial branch. I have named a really good man to the bench, the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, named Miguel Estrada. And I expect the United States Senate to treat this man with respect. I don't want to see the same thing that happened to some of my other candidates, in that they distort his record. I don't want them to distort his record like they did Ms. Owen's or Mr. Pickering. For the sake of a good, strong Federal bench, for the sake of recognizing this man's intelligence and his capabilities, the Senate needs to confirm Miguel Estrada.

Let me share some things that are on my mind, things that I've spent a lot of time thinking about. First is jobs. I think a lot—I spend a lot of time thinking about jobs here in America. I want people to find work. I want people to be able to put bread on the table. I want this country to continue to promote policies that encourage job growth. That's what we ought to be asking here in Washington: What can we do to encourage there to be job growth?

The economy is not like it should be. There are some encouraging signs. Of course, interest rates are low; inflation is low; productivity amongst our workers and producers is the best in the world; and that's incredibly positive.

The foundation for growth is there. The foundation was somewhat troubled by the fact that we had some of our corporate citizens decide they weren't going to tell the truth. They fudged the numbers to deceive shareholder and employee alike. We're taking care of that. I've signed the most comprehensive corporate reform since Franklin Roosevelt was the President. You might have noticed yesterday, people are being brought to justice here in America. We expect there to be corporate responsibility in America, and we will enforce the law to make sure there is corporate responsibility in America.

We're also dealing with things here in Congress to help people have more money. We believe very strongly that when a person has more money in his or her pocket, it is more likely to increase the job base, because if you have more money, you demand a good or a service. When you demand a good or a service, somebody will produce the good or a service. And when somebody produces a good or a service, somebody is more likely to find work.

Tax relief was incredibly important at this moment in our American history. Tax relief will help stimulate job growth because it helps stimulate the growth of small businesses. There are a lot of Latino-owned small businesses in America. One of the great success stories about our economy and about our Nation is the fact that a lot of people realize their dreams through owning their own business. One of the fastest growing sectors of small business in the country is

Latino-owned businesses. And the tax relief plan was really good for small businesses here in America. And the Congress needs to make them permanent.

In order to make sure that we grow our economy, we've got to make sure Congress doesn't overspend. The Senate doesn't even have a budget. If you don't have a budget, it makes it hard to be fiscally sound with the people's money. Sometimes here in Washington, people forget whose money we spend. See, they think it's the Government's money. It's not. It's the people's money. And we've got to be sound when we spend the people's money. We ought to fund priorities, but as they head out of town, the Congress must not overspend. For the sake of job creation and job growth, they must be realistic with the people's money.

I submitted a budget that will get us to balance—a budget that if there's fiscal discipline, we can get back to balance. And Congress needs to not only remember whose money they spend, but Congress must not overspend on their—as they're trying to get out of town.

And finally, there are some things that we can do here to create jobs for working people. We need to have a terrorism insurance package. You see, there's a lot of folks that cannot get insurance, a lot of construction programs that aren't going forward because people can't get insurance, because of what the terrorists did. It's estimated there's over 300,000 hardhats that could be working, 300,000 hardhat jobs that are delayed. Those are our fellow Americans who aren't getting the chance to employ their skills. This afternoon, I'm going to be talking about this issue more. But if Congress truly is interested in joining with me to do everything we can to expand the job base, they need to get a terrorism insurance package before they go home. It's good for the hardhats of America.

The security of the country is on my mind, too. See, there's an enemy which still hates America, and they want to hit us. It's just reality. And therefore, we've got to do everything we can to protect the homeland. I spend a lot of time worrying about the job security of the American people. I spend a lot of time worrying about the homeland security of the American people as well. It's

my number one priority right now as the President, to protect our homeland.

We must do everything we can to protect innocent life here at home. I'm sure people have—have asked you, you know, why—why would the enemy hate America? Your kids are probably saying, "Why would they hate America?" And you've got to tell them it's because they hate us for what we love. We love freedom. We love the freedom to worship the way we see fit. We love the freedom to speak our mind. We love the freedom to campaign. We love the freedom of the press. We love all our freedoms. We love our diversity. We love the fact that God has created people equal. We love that. We value life in America. Everybody is precious. Everybody has worth. Everybody counts. And we're not changing our mind about those values and our freedom.

The enemy hates freedom. They hate innocent life. They are willing to take innocent life and, at the same time, hijack a great religion. And so long as they are out there, we must do everything we can to defend the homeland—which means I need the capacity here in Washington to assure the American people that the good folks at the Federal level are doing everything they can to protect you.

There's over 100 agencies involved with homeland security, and so I decided, in order to make the protection of the homeland the number one priority, that we ought to bundle all those up to the extent possible and put them under one agency, so that there is authority and responsibility, so that we can set the legacy for future Presidents to be able to better protect the homeland.

And we're having a pretty good debate here in Washington. The House of Representatives, thankfully, passed a bill that is a good bill. The Senate is still struggling with the bill. They need to get it done before they go home. The—let me just tell you what the problem is, so you can get a sense of why I have some frustrations with what is taking place in the Senate.

First of all, the frontline troops, the employees who are working on your behalf, are really good people, good, honorable, hard-working people. And they are people that the morale of which is going to be in the interest

of any President or any Secretary of Homeland Security. In other words, we've got to make sure that morale is high in order for us to better do our jobs. So there should be no question in any employee's mind about the intentions of a President or a future President, that we want people to have job satisfaction in order to be able to do the job.

But we also need to have the authority necessary to succeed in the critical mission. We've got to have the ability to put the right people at the right place at the right time in order to protect America.

Many of you come from border communities or border States. You know full well that on our borders, there's three different agencies involved with protecting the border, agencies of good, hard-working people, but sometimes agencies with different strategies and different approaches. And sometimes those different strategies and different approaches can promote gaps in security. And we've got to have the capacity to do everything we can to protect the American people from somebody who would want to bring a weapon into our country, for example.

In other words, we've got to be able to let the hard-working people in these agencies better do their job. We can't be constrained by work rules that prevent us from doing a better job, and that's the debate.

The Senate—and some Members of the Senate want to deny this President and future Presidents the authority of—the ability to protect our national security, the ability in some cases to suspend collective bargaining for the sake of national security. That ability has been granted from Jimmy Carter on. President Kennedy had the authority; Jimmy Carter was President when they codified it into law. It doesn't make any sense, in a time of war, to take away that part of the Presidential authority. It just doesn't make any sense to me. It's very important that the President have the capacity to determine that vital national security interests take priority over standard rules governing management and labor relations.

What's really interesting is that if this authority is not applied to the Department of Homeland Security, it still will be applied to Departments such as the Department of Education or the Department of Agriculture.

Those are vital Departments, but does it make sense to allow the authority to exist in the Department of Agriculture but not in the new Department of Homeland Security? Of course it doesn't make any sense. And that's why the Senate must be realistic and reasonable as it approaches this very important issue about how to leave a legacy of homeland security in place.

I will not accept a rollback in the authority that other Presidents have had, and the Senate must understand that. The Senate must understand that I have a duty not only to protect the American people but a duty to protect the prerogatives of the President. If it's good enough for the Department of Agriculture, if this authority is good enough for the employees of the Department of Education or HHS, it certainly should be good enough for the Department of Homeland Security.

We need flexibility to deal with emerging threats. The Customs Service, for example, decided to require inspectors at the Nation's 301 ports to wear radiation detection devices. The world changed. We are worried about weapons of mass destruction coming into our country, and so the Customs Service said, "Why don't we have our folks wear radiation detection devices to be able to pick up any possible signal." The devices work, and they're an important part of somebody being able to do their job.

Under the rules that some Senators support, the union that represents the Customs would be able to say, "You can't do that. That must be voluntary." For the—that doesn't make any sense to me, that we not—that we have to work through a process that would enable our hard-working Customs officials to be able to do that which they think is necessary to protect America. And we can't afford sitting around for a year debating whether or not wearing devices ought to be voluntary or not.

Collective bargaining is important. I support the idea of workers being able to have collective bargaining. But we need to be able to manage the new agency so that we can best protect the American people. And I call upon the Senate to understand the importance of what I just said.

The best way to protect America is to hunt the killers down, one at a time. And that's what we're going to do. This is a different kind of war. It is a war which is not going to be measured in terms of territories gained or tanks destroyed or flotilla destroyed. It's a war in which we're going through an international manhunt, one killer at a time, and bringing people to justice—which means it's essential we continue to uphold the doctrine that says, "Either you're with us, or you're with them." And that doctrine still stands, and there's a lot of really fine countries, with good leaders, working with us to find these killers and to bring them to justice.

And we're just doing just that. Sometimes you'll read about it; sometimes you won't read about it. That's the kind of war this is. Sometimes there's achievements that they'll be blasting out over the cables, and people will be talking about it forever, and sometimes you just won't know what's taking place. But you've got to know, we're making progress. We've hauled in over a couple of thousand of these—we got a guy the other day, who popped his head up and is now no longer a threat to America. He's the one that was going to be the 20th hijacker, and he's no longer available for action with the enemy.

It takes a lot of work—it takes a lot of work. It takes a strong military. And for those of you who have got loved ones in the military, you've got to know, I've got great confidence in our troops. And I want to thank you for your service, and I want to thank you for their service.

And the United States Congress must get a defense appropriations bill to my desk before they go home. I asked for the largest increase in defense spending since President Reagan was the President, because I want our troops to have the best pay, the best training, and best possible equipment. And I want to send a message to the world: When it comes to the defense of our freedom, there's no artificial timeline. When it comes to defending America, civilization, the ability for our children to grow up in a free society, it doesn't matter how long it takes. This great nation will stay the course.

So I expect there to be a defense bill on my desk. I know that Members of the House and Senate are working hard to reconcile

their differences, and I appreciate that. There needs to be a bill on my desk before they go home. There's going to be an important message to determine—important message we send to the world.

And so we're making progress on that front of the war against terror. But there are other fronts on the war against terror that we must deal with. We must deal with countries run by people who are some of the world's worst leaders, who harbor, develop, want to hurt us with the world's worst weapons. That's a form of terror.

The war on terror is more than just Al Qaida. The war on terror is to deal with nations who have terrorized their own people and have intention to terrorize us. See, oceans no longer protect us. There's a new era in America. There's a new threat that faces us. And we've got to deal with these threats. I made the decision to deal with these—the threat of Iraq in an international community. I've called upon other nations to join us, and there will be other nations joining us to help disarm Iraq.

We'll determine whether or not the U.N. Security Council wants to live up to its obligations. After all, for 11 long years the dictator in Iraq, the man who has gassed his own people, gassed people in his neighborhood, the man who's expressly—expressed his hatred for America and our friends and allies—we'll see whether or not the United Nations will be the United Nations or the League of Nations when it comes to dealing with this man who for 11 years has thumbed his nose at resolution after resolution after resolution after resolution.

My intent, of course, is for the United Nations to do its job. I think it'll make it easier for us to keep the peace. My intent is for the world to understand that the obligation is up to Saddam Hussein to disarm like he said he would do. My intent is to put together a vast coalition of countries who understand the threat of Saddam Hussein.

The military option is my last choice, not my first. It's my last choice. But Saddam has got to understand, the United Nations must know, that the will of this country is strong.

Yesterday I had the honor of standing on the steps of the White House, at the Rose Garden, with the Republican leader and

Democrat leader alike—Speaker Hastert and Leader Gephardt, Trent Lott and Joe Lieberman, John McCain and Evan Bayh—Member after Member who has committed to join with the administration to send a clear signal that when it comes to defending our freedom, the United States of America will stand united and stand strong.

The choice is up to the United Nations to show its resolve. The choice is up to Saddam Hussein to fulfill its word—his word. And if neither of them acts, the United States, in deliberate fashion, will lead a coalition to take away the world's worst weapons from one of the world's worst leaders.

I say that because I have a deep desire for peace, peace in America, peace in the Middle East. I believe peace is possible. I believe that out of the evil done to America can come some really—some good. And one of the good is international peace; I believe that. And therefore, I will continue to speak clearly about good and evil, continue to renounce terrorism in any form, continue to lead the world toward peace, peace not only for ourselves but, because we value all human life, peace in parts of the world that have given up on peace.

I know at home we can be a better country, too. The great country of ours must recognize there are pockets of despair and hopelessness in America. Amongst our plenty, there are people who hurt. So long as any of us hurt, we all should hurt. But I believe that this country can solve any problem put in its path, and one of those is to help inspire all Americans to understand the greatness of this country.

One way to do so, to make a better country, is to make sure that everybody is educated. I passed a really good bill with the Congress and signed a really good bill. They passed it; I signed it. *[Laughter]* I worked with them. And it says this: Every child can learn, see. Every child can learn. And this country will challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. This plan recognizes it's so easy to quit on children whose parents may not speak English as a first language. It's easy just to shuffle them through, say, "You know, these kids can't learn; move them through."

We insist upon strong accountability. If you receive Federal money, you've got to

measure, because we believe every child can learn. And therefore, we want to know—we want to know. We must have the courage as citizens of the country to blow the whistle on failure when we find our children trapped in schools which will not teach and will not change.

A better America is one that takes care of our seniors, with a good health care system. Medicine has changed. Medicare hasn't. Medicine has changed, and yet the old system hasn't changed with it. And we've got to change Medicare. For the good of our seniors, we need prescription drug benefits for our seniors. We need a modern Medicare system.

But the best way to change America is for America to really rely upon the true strength of the country, which is the people of the country. See, Government can hand out money, but it cannot put love in people's hearts or a sense of purpose in people's lives. That is done when one of our fellow citizens finds somebody who hurts and puts their arm around him or her, and says, "I love you. What can I do to help you? What can I do to make sure you understand the American Dream is meant for you?" That could be mentoring a child, teaching a child to read. That could be running a Boy Scout or Girl Scout troop, teaching a child values. That could be making sure somebody has got food if they're hungry.

See, the great strength of America is the heart and soul of the people of this country. And so what's happened is, and it seems like to me, is that the evil ones hit us; America took a step back and said, "In order to fight evil, we all must do some good." And my call to the fellow—my fellow Americans is: Love somebody just like you'd like to be loved yourself; that if you're interested in fighting the evil done to us, it doesn't take much, just a small act of kindness and generosity on a daily basis. And it's that gathering momentum of the millions of acts of kindness and generosity and compassion which takes place in America that truly defines the character of this Nation.

I want to thank you all for serving this Nation. May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:59 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Texas Supreme Court Justice Priscilla Owen and Judge Charles W. Pickering, Sr., whose nominations to be U.S. Circuit Judges for the Fifth Circuit failed when the Senate Judiciary Committee refused to send them forward for a vote by the Senate.

Remarks Calling for Congressional Action on Terrorism Insurance Legislation

October 3, 2002

Thanks for coming today. We're talking about a serious subject, which is jobs, the ability for people to find work in America. I spend a lot of my time worrying about the job security of our fellow citizens. And after last year's terrorist attacks that destroyed life and destroyed building, you've got to recognize they hurt our economy as well.

We responded to those attacks with incredible unity, and I'm grateful. And the enemy is not. But we need to show the same unity and resolve to get our people back to work. Too many Americans are looking for work, and they can't find work. The economic signs are good—they are. Interest rates are low. Inflation is low. Our workers are the most productive in the world. Our entrepreneurs are the most productive in the world. And that's incredibly positive.

Yet, we can't be satisfied until anybody who is looking for work can find a job. That's what we've got to do here in America. And we can do more in Washington, DC. Before these folks go home, there is something they can do to help—help America's hardhats get back to work on big construction projects. If there is concern, like I know there is, about our fellow citizens, concern here in Washington about people being able to find work, the Congress can help by passing a terrorism insurance bill now.

We have been talking about this up here for a year. And our workers cannot wait any longer. And so my call on the Congress is to reach an agreement by tomorrow, so by the time they go home, I can sign a bill, a bill which will increase our job base by the thousands.